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Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CLASSIFYING TANGIBLE ASSETS	§	

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendments set forth below.

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Applicant respectfully submits a substitute specification under 37 CFR §1.125(b) as follows. Applicant hereby states that said substitute specification does not include new matter and provides a clean copy and a marked up copy as required by MPEP §608.01(q).

[0001] This patent application claims priority from a provisional application entitled "A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CLASSIFYING TANGIBLE ASSETS," Serial No. 60/261,385, having a filing date of January 12, 2001.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

[0002] The classification code utilized by the present invention, included as part of the specification, contains material which is subject to copyright protection. The copyright owner has no objection to the facsimile reproduction of this material as it appears in the United States Patent and Trademark patent files or records, but otherwise reserves all copyright rights whatsoever.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The present invention relates generally to a classification system and more particularly to a method and system for classifying tangible art objects.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] Classification systems such as the Dewey Decimal System and the Library of Congress classification system have been in existence for some time. To classify each item, each work is divided into separate categories and assigned an alpha-numeric identifier. This allows each work to be shelved in a predetermined location such that the status of each work may be readily determined.

[0005] Other products have classified an item so that it may be compared to similar items such that its value may be estimated. Products such as the Kelly Blue Book have been used to assess the value of mass produced items, such as automobiles, using input data such as model year, body condition, and mileage.

[0006] The prior art has attempted to apply the above methodologies to tangible assets such as art objects, but with little economic or statistical success. The materials, method of construction, authenticity, condition, and provenance seen in an original, one-of-a-kind art object cannot be valued with a reasonable degree of certainty with non-subjective factors alone. Art objects rely to a greater extent upon subjective assessment by scholars, critics, connoisseurs, and curators such that a valuation of an art object must take into account not only current subjective data but also data that spans years into the past.

[0007] The present invention allows for the classification of art objects in a manner that provides stability to the valuation process and to economic and statistical consistency. The present invention is designed to classify art objects using a comprehensive asset class structure premised on curatorial and operational requirements.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] Accordingly, the present invention is a new and innovative manner of classifying tangible assets that can, in addition, provide access to a plurality of independently moving market trajectories within the art economy. The present invention provides a definitive reporting standard for measuring and tracking the marketplace performance of fine art, decorative art, antiquities, other discrete disciplines, and collectibles. This allows collectors, dealers, auctioneers, bankers, asset managers, and legal advisors assess financial risk and to manage and track the value and cross-generational transfer of art objects.

[0009] The present invention utilizes a unique classification code which divides tangible art objects such as fine art, decorative art, antiquities, other discrete disciplines, and collectibles into order, family, genus, species, and sub-species categories. Categories assigned to a given asset may then be cross-referenced with relevant auction house data, including art objects that were offered for sale but failed to find buyers, to define market trajectories and help determine fair market value. In one embodiment, relevant asset data may be weighted for risk against pre-sale estimates, venue performance and other risk factors as well as discounted to diminish the past effects of extreme or irrational behavior on the part of buyers on the auction floor.

[0010] The present invention allows tangible art objects to be classified into a series of categories and assigned a series of identifiers such that the asset may be cross referenced with relevant data stored upon a database to track worldwide market performance of specific types of categorized assets. Historic market performance patterns may be graphed and cross-referenced to well known standards such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500), among others, to ensure statistical reliability.

[0011] By utilizing a uniform and statistically sound method of classifying art objects, the present invention not only provides financial institutions with the consistent taxonomy they require for conducting rigorous risk analysis for lending purposes, it also provides a standard nomenclature for classifying art objects. Specifically, the present invention allows the value of an art object to be determined with greater accuracy such that lenders may set advance rates more precisely, thus decreasing risk to financial intermediaries.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] Fig. 1 illustrates an embodiment of the present invention utilizing a computer system.

[0013] Fig. 2A illustrates the fine art asset category of one embodiment of the present invention.

[0014] Fig. 2B illustrates the decorative art asset category of one embodiment of the present invention.

[0015] Fig. 2C illustrates the antiquities, other discrete disciplines and collectibles asset categories of one embodiment of the present invention.

[0016] Figs. 3A – 3M are flowchart diagrams illustrating one embodiment of the tangible asset classification process of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0017] The present invention is herein described as a method for classifying tangible assets and as a computer system for classifying tangible assets.

[0018] Referring to Fig. 1 , the classification of tangible assets may be instituted by any suitable electronic device such as a computer system (10). In one embodiment, the computer system of the present invention has at least one database (12) for storing information for each given asset and for storing information concerning each category of assets. The term "database" is used throughout this document to describe anything used to collect and/or organize data. This

includes, but is not limited to, a computer, card catalog, hard copy file, electronic file, email storage device, and/or electronic memory device. In one embodiment, the database (12) is searchable by a processing unit (14) coupled to the database (12). The database being capable of storing asset information describing a plurality of assets according to one or more identifiers. Asset information may be entered into the computer system (10) using an input device (not shown) such as a mouse or keyboard. Asset information may be transmitted through local or wide area networks (15) or the internet (15) so that it may be readily updated and available to remote users (17).

[0019] Referring to Figs. 1, 2A, 2B and 2C, the processing unit (14) of the present invention is capable of establishing one or more order asset categories (16) for use in classifying tangible assets. In one embodiment, these categories (16) include fine art, decorative art, antiquities, other discrete disciplines and collectibles. Once order categories have been established, the processing unit (14) of the present invention is capable of utilizing input data regarding a given asset to classify the asset into an order category (16). A first identifier (26) is assigned to the given asset according to which order category best describes the given asset. The present invention is capable of searching the database (12) of the present invention utilizing the first identifier assigned to the given asset to retrieve asset information for assets having the same first identifier (26).

[0020] To enhance the searching abilities of the present invention, the processing unit (14) is capable of establishing family, genus, species and sub-species categories (18, 20, 22 and 24, respectively) for use in further classifying the given asset as described further below. The

processing unit (14) of the present invention identifies each category with an identifier. In one embodiment, a first identifier (26) is used for each order category (16), a second identifier (28) is used for each family category (18), a third identifier (30) is used for each genus category (20), a fourth identifier (32) is used for each species category (22), and a fifth identifier (34) is used for each sub-species category (24). These identifiers may be letters, numbers, or any other textual or graphical information. Once a given asset is classified into each applicable category, the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth identifiers (26, 28, 30, 32 and 34, respectively) may be combined to form an identifier code, as described further below. The identifier code provides a common reference such that information gathered for assets having the same identifiers may be quickly and easily compared with the given asset. Specifically, the present invention allows the value of a given art object to be evaluated using stored information describing other assets having the same identifier code. The present invention establishes a consistent framework to allow data to be sorted and compiled so that lenders may assess the risk of an art object and set advance rates more precisely, thus decreasing risk and enhancing asset value.

[0021] Referring to Figs. 3A – 3M, the present invention may also be described as a method for classifying tangible assets. Figs. 3A – 3M illustrate one embodiment of the tangible asset classification process of the present invention.

[0022] Referring to Fig. 3A, one or more order asset categories (16) are established by the present invention. Specifically, utilizing one or more features of a given asset to be examined, the asset is classified according to which order category best describes the asset. Third, the asset is assigned a first identifier (26). In one embodiment, the first identifier (26) assigned to the

given asset is stored in a database (12). The term "database" is used throughout this document to describe anything used to collect and/or organize data. This includes, but is not limited to, a computer, card catalog, hardcopy file, electronic file, email storage device and/or electronic memory device.

[0023] Once the asset has been classified according to one of the order asset categories and a first identifier has been assigned, the present invention is capable of performing searches of the database (12) for stored asset information utilizing the assigned first identifier. This asset information may then be used to cross reference the given asset with other assets such that the asset may be valued. This asset information may be transmitted through a computer network so that such comparisons may be made worldwide.

[0024] Referring to Figs. 2A, 2B, 2C and 3A, in one embodiment of the present invention, the order categories are Fine Art, Decorative Art, Antiquities, Other Discrete Disciplines, and Collectibles. In one embodiment, "001" is used as the first identifier for the Fine Art order category, "002" is used as the first identifier for the Decorative Art category, "003" is used as the first identifier for the Antiquities category, "004" is used as the first identifier for the Other Discrete Disciplines category, and "005" is used as the first identifier for the Collectibles category.

[0025] In one embodiment, one or more family categories (18) may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. It is then determined, based upon one or more features

of the given asset, what family category (18) describes the given asset. Once Family categories have been established, the given asset is assigned a second identifier (28).

[0026] Referring to Figs 2A and 3A, in one embodiment, the Fine Art order category includes four family categories each having a second identifier. In one embodiment, these categories include Paintings having a second identifier of "001", Sculpture "002", Works on Paper "003", and Tapestries "004". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category and a Tapestries family category would be designated by first and second identifiers of "001.004".

[0027] Referring to Figs 2B and 3C, in one embodiment, the Decorative Art order category includes five family categories each having a second identifier. These categories include Furniture "001", Decorations "002", Couture "003", Ephemera "004", and Textiles "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category and a Textiles family category would be designated by "002.005".

[0028] Referring to Figs 2C and 3E, in one embodiment, the Antiquities order category includes seven family categories each having a second identifier. These categories include Ancient Near East "001", Egyptian "002", Etruscan, Roman "003", Early Church "004", Greek & Hellenistic "005", Pre-Columbian "006", and Pre-History "007". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Antiquities order category and an Egyptian family category would be designated by "003.002".

[0029] Referring to Figs 2C and 3F, in one embodiment, the Other Discrete Disciplines order category includes nine family categories each having a second identifier. These categories include Arms & Armor "001", Asian Art "002", Books, Bindings, Manuscripts, Signatures, & Maps "003", Carpets "004", Clocks, Timepieces and Scientific Instruments "005", Contemporary Forms in Media & Action "006", Islamic Art "007", Judaica "008", and Tribal Art "009". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Other Discrete Disciplines order category and an Carpets family category would be designated by "004.004".

[0030] Referring to Figs 2C and 3G, in one embodiment, the Collectibles order category includes eight family categories each having a second identifier. These categories include Animation & Comic Art "001", Coins "002", Geophysical & Mineral "003", Sports Memorabilia "004", Stamps"005", Toys "006", and Vintage Cars "007", and Wines "008". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Collectibles order category and a Wines family category would be designated by "005.008".

[0031] Once the asset has been classified according to an order and family asset category and first and second identifiers have been assigned, the present invention may store same within the database (12). The database (12) may then be searched using the first and second identifiers in order to retrieve asset information stored therein. This asset information may then be utilized to value the given asset, as described above.

[0032] In one embodiment, one or more genus categories (20) may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. It is then determined, based upon one or more features of the given asset, what genus category (20) describes the given asset. Once genus categories have been established, the given asset is assigned a third identifier (30).

[0033] Referring to Figs 2A, 3B and 3K, in one embodiment, the Paintings family category includes twelve genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American through 19th century "001", English through 19th century "002", French through 19th century "003", Other Continental through 19th century "004", Contemporary "005", Modernist 20th century Masterworks "006", Illuminations & Incunabula "007", Latin America "008", Mannerist "009", Medieval "010", Old Master "011", and Renaissance "012". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, and a Mannerist genus category would be designated by "001.001.009".

[0034] Referring to Figs 2A and 3H, in one embodiment, the Sculpture family category includes nine genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American through 19th century "001", English through 19th century "002", French through 19th century "003", Other Continental through 19th century "004", Contemporary "005", Modernist 20th century Masterworks "006", Late Roman, Gothic & Medieval "007", Renaissance "008", and Garden Sculpture "009". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Sculpture family category, and a Garden Sculpture genus category would be designated by "001.002.009".

[0035] Referring to Figs 2A and 3I, in one embodiment, the Works on Paper family category includes six genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Drawings "001", Watercolors "002", Photographs "003", The other print media "004", Contemporary "005", and Modernist 20th century Masterworks "006". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Works on Paper family category, and a photographs genus category would be designated by first, second, and third identifiers of "001.003.003".

[0036] Referring to Figs 2B and 3C, in one embodiment, the Furniture family category within the Decorative Art order category includes five genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American through 19th century "001", English through 19th century "002", French through 19th century "003", Other Continental through 19th century "004", and Modernist 20th century Masterworks "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Furniture family category, and a Other Continental through 19th century genus category would be designated by "002.001.004".

[0037] Referring to Figs 2B, 3C and 3L, in one embodiment, the Decorations family category within the Decorative Art order category includes five genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American through 19th century "001", English through 19th century "002", French through 19th century "003", Other Continental through 19th century "004", and Modernist 20th century Masterworks "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Decorations family category, and an Other Continental through 19th century genus category would be designated by "002.002.004".

[0038] Referring to Figs 2B, 3C and 3M, in one embodiment, the Couture family category within the Decorative Art order category includes three genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Costumes "001", Accessories "002", and Jewelry: Precious and Other "003". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Couture family category, and a Costumes genus category would be designated by "002.003.001".

[0039] Referring to Figs 2C and 3E, in one embodiment, the Ancient Near East, Egyptian, Etruscan / Roman, Early Church or Greek & Hellenistic family categories within the Antiquities order category include three genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Fine Art "001", Coinage "002", and Articles of Daily Life "003". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Antiquities order category, an Egyptian family category, and a Fine Art genus category would be designated by "003.002.001".

[0040] In one embodiment, the Pre-Columbian family category within the Antiquities order category include two genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Fine Art "001" and Articles of Daily Life "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Antiquities order category, a Pre-Columbian family category, and a Fine Art genus category would be designated by "003.006.001".

[0041] Referring to Figs 2C and 3F, in one embodiment, the Asian Art family category within the Other Discrete Disciplines order category includes five genus categories each having a third

identifier. These categories include Chinese "001", Japanese "002", Korean "003", Indian "004", and Central & Southeast Asian "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Couture family category, and a Costumes genus category would be designated by "002.003.001".

[0042] Referring to Figs 2C and 3F, in one embodiment, the Tribal Art family category within the Other Discrete Disciplines order category includes three genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American Indian Art "001", African Art "002", and Oceanic Art "003". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Other Discrete Disciplines order category, a Tribal Art family category, and a African Art genus category would be designated by "004.008.002".

[0043] Once the asset has been classified according to an order, family, and genus asset category and first, second and third identifiers have been assigned, the present invention may store same within the database (12). The database (12) may then be searched using the first, second and third identifiers in order to retrieve asset information stored therein. This asset information may then be utilized to value the given asset, as described above.

[0044] In one embodiment, one or more species categories (22) may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. It is then determined, based upon one or more features of the given asset, what species category (22) describes the given asset. Once species categories (22) have been established, the given asset is assigned a fourth identifier (32).

[0045] Referring to Figs 2A, 3A, 3B and 3K, in one embodiment, the American through 19th century genus category having a Paintings family category includes three species categories each having a fourth identifier. These categories include American School "001", Itinerant Painters "002", and Impressionists "003". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, an American through 19th century genus category, and an American School species category would be designated by "001.001.001.001".

[0046] In one embodiment, the English through 19th century genus category having a Paintings family category includes one species category having a fourth identifier. This category includes Victorian "001". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, an English through 19th century genus category, and a Victorian species category would be designated by "001.001.002.001".

[0047] In one embodiment, the French through 19th century genus category having a Paintings family category includes two species categories each having a fourth identifier. These categories include Barbizon School "001" and Impressionists "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, a French through 19th century genus category, and an Impressionists species category would be designated by "001.001.003.002".

[0048] In one embodiment, the Modernist 20th century Masterworks genus category having a Paintings family category includes one species category having a fourth identifier. This category

includes American "001". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, a Modernist 20th century Masterworks genus category, and an American species category would be designated by "001.001.006.001".

[0049] Referring to Figs 2A, 3A, 3B and 3H, in one embodiment, the French through 19th century genus category having a Sculpture family category includes one species category having a fourth identifier. This category includes 19th century "001". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Sculpture family category, a French through 19th century genus category, and a 19th century species category would be designated by "001.002.003.001".

[0050] Referring to Figs 2A, 3A, 3B and 3I, in one embodiment, the Drawings genus category having a Works on Paper family category includes two species categories each having a fourth identifier. These categories include Old Master "001" and Other "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Works on Paper family category, Drawings genus category, and an Old Master species category would be designated by "001.003.001.001".

[0051] Referring to Figs 2B, 3A and 3C, in one embodiment, the American through 19th century, English through 19th century, and French through 19th century genus categories located within the Furniture family category each include one species category having a fourth identifier. This category includes Seat & Case "001". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Furniture family category, an American

through 19th century genus category, and a Seat & Case species category would be designated by "002.001.001.001".

[0052] In one embodiment, the American through 19th century, English through 19th century, French through 19th century, and Other Continental through 19th century genus categories located within the Decorations family category each include five species categories each having a fourth identifier. These categories include Ceramic "001", Metalwork: Precious & Other "002", Stonework "003", Glass "004" and Wood "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Decorations family category, an American through 19th century genus category, and a Wood species category would be designated by "002.002.001.005".

[0053] Once the asset has been classified according to an order, family, genus and species asset category and first, second, third and fourth identifiers have been assigned, the present invention may store same within the database (12). The database (12) may then be searched using the first, second, third and fourth identifiers in order to retrieve asset information stored therein. This asset information may then be utilized to value the given asset, as described above.

[0054] In one embodiment, one or more sub-species categories (24) may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. It is then determined, based upon one or more features of the given asset, what sub-species category (24) describes the given asset. Once sub-species categories have been established, the given asset is assigned a fifth identifier (34).

[0055] Referring to Figs 2A, 3A, 3B and 3K, in one embodiment, the American School species category includes two sub-species categories each having a fifth identifier. These categories include 1850 through 1900, designated by "001" and Hudson River School "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, an American through 19th Century genus category, an American School species category and a Hudson River School sub-species category would be designated by "001.001.001.001.002".

[0056] Referring to Figs 2A, 3A, 3B and 3H, in one embodiment, the 19th century species category includes two sub-species categories each having a fifth identifier. These categories include Metalwork "001" and Stonework "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Sculpture family category, an French through 19th century genus category, a 19th century species category and a Metalwork sub-species category would be designated by "001.002.003.001.001".

[0057] Referring to Figs 2B, 3A, 3C and 3L, in one embodiment, the Seat & Case species category located within either the American through 19th century, English through 19th century, or French through 19th century genus categories each include one sub-species category having a fifth identifier. This category includes 1750 through 1800, designated by "001" and Hudson River School "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Furniture family category, an American through 19th century genus category, a Seat & Case species category and a 1750 through 1800 sub-species category would be designated by "002.001.001.001.001".

[0058] In one embodiment, the identifier code assigned to a given asset may be compiled by a database for storage, and/or used to conduct comparisons between the given asset and other assets having the same identifier codes. This is done using valuation information that may be stored in the database. The valuation information may be cross referenced with the identifier code to determine the fair market value of the given asset. Asset information may be transmitted through local or wide area networks or the internet so that information may be readily available anywhere.

[0059] In another embodiment, the present invention allows for the classification of tangible assets by following a few simple steps. First, a classification hierarchy (100) having a plurality of categories is provided. Second, at least one given asset is classified by generating output that indicates an applicable order category (16) for the given asset.

[0060] The given asset may be further classified by generating output that indicates the applicable family (18), genus, (20), species (22), and sub-species category (24) for the given asset. Each applicable order, family, genus, species, and sub-species category (16, 18, 20, 22 and 24, respectively) may then be assigned first, second, third, fourth, and fifth identifiers (26, 28, 30, 32 and 34, respectively). These assigned identifiers may be combined to form an identifier code which may be used to identify and compare assets of the same classifications.

[0061] The present invention provides even greater accuracy to the classification process by providing an additional one hundred separate and distinct classifications that may be combined

with the identifier code. Specifically, the present invention provides a scale (76) of 1 to 100 on the left hand side of the classification code, as illustrated in Figure 2. This additional identifier may be combined with the first, second, third, fourth and fifth identifiers (26, 28, 30, 32 and 34, respectively) of the identifier code to provide further classification of the given asset. In one embodiment, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category (16), a Sculpture family category (18), and a Garden Sculpture genus category (20) would be designated by "001.13.002.009", "13" being the additional identifier in the identifier code.

[0062] Although the invention has been described with reference to a specific embodiment, this description is not meant to be construed in a limiting sense. On the contrary, various modifications of the disclosed embodiments will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon reference to the description of the invention. It is therefore contemplated that the appended claims will cover such modifications, alternatives, and equivalents that fall within the true spirit and scope of the invention.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0063] The present invention is a system and method of classifying tangible assets. Tangible assets, such as art objects, are classified using a unique classification scheme which divides tangible art objects such as fine art, decorative art, antiquities, other discrete disciplines, and collectibles into order, family, genus, species, and sub-species asset categories. The present invention allows tangible art objects to be classified into asset categories and assigned a series of identifiers such that the asset may be cross referenced with relevant data to track worldwide

market performance of specific types of categorized assets. Historic market performance patterns may be graphed and cross-referenced to well known standards such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500), among others, to ensure statistical reliability.

A marked up version of the changes to the specification is attached.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please add new claims 100-129 as follows:

100. (New) A method of classifying tangible assets comprising the steps of:

establishing one or more asset categories;

utilizing one or more features of said asset, classifying said asset such that said asset is described by one of said asset categories;

assigning a first identifier to said asset;

101. (New) The method of claim 100, further comprising the additional steps of:

providing a storage device capable of storing tangible asset information;

storing said asset information within said storage device; and

searching said storage device for said asset information utilizing said first identifier.

102. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein said asset categories are selected from the group consisting of fine art, decorative art, antiquities, other discrete disciplines and collectibles.

103. (New) The method of claim 102, further comprising the additional steps of:

establishing one or more secondary asset categories for each of said asset categories;

utilizing one or more features of said asset, classifying said asset such that said asset is described by one of said secondary asset categories;

assigning a second identifier to said asset; and

searching said storage device for said asset information utilizing said first identifier and said second identifier.

104. (New) The method of claim 103, further comprising the step of:

combining said first identifier and said second identifier to create an asset identifier code.

105. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein said secondary asset categories are selected from the group consisting of paintings, sculpture, works on paper, tapestries, furniture, decorations, couture, ephemera, textiles, ancient near east, Egyptian, Etruscan/Roman, early church, Greek/Hellenistic, pre-Columbian, pre-history, arms & armor, Asian art, books/bindings/manuscripts/signatures/maps, carpets, clocks/timepieces/scientific instruments, contemporary forms in media & action, Islamic art, Judaica, tribal art, animation & comic art, coins, geophysical & mineral, sports memorabilia, stamps, toys, vintage cars, and wines.

106. (New) The method of claim 105, further comprising the additional steps of:

establishing one or more tertiary asset categories for each of said asset categories;

utilizing one or more features of said asset, classifying said asset such that said asset is described by one of said tertiary asset categories;

assigning a third identifier to said asset; and

searching said storage device for said asset information utilizing said first identifier, said second identifier and said third identifier.

107. (New) The method of claim 106, further comprising the step of:

combining said first identifier, said second identifier and said third identifier to create an asset identifier code.

108. (New) The method of claim 106, wherein said tertiary asset categories are selected from the group consisting of American through the 19th century, English through the 19th century, French through the 19th century, other continental through the 19th century, contemporary, modernist 20th century masterworks, illuminations & incunabula, Latin America, mannerist, medieval, old master, renaissance, Late Roman/Gothic & Medieval, garden sculpture, drawings, watercolors, photographs, the other print media, costumes, accessories, precious/other jewelry, fine art, coinage, articles of daily life, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, Central and Southeast Asian, American Indian art, African art, and oceanic art.

109. (New) The method of claim 108, further comprising the additional steps of:

establishing one or more quandary asset categories for each of said asset categories;

utilizing one or more features of said asset, classifying said asset such that said asset is described by one of said quandary asset categories;

assigning a fourth identifier to said asset; and

searching said storage device for said asset information utilizing said first identifier, said second identifier, said third identifier and said fourth identifier.

110. (New) The method of claim 109, further comprising the step of:

combining said first identifier, said second identifier, said third identifier and said fourth identifier to create an asset identifier code.

111. (New) The method of claim 109, wherein said quandary asset categories are selected from the group consisting of American School, old master, other, ceramic, precious metal work/other metal work, stone work, glass and wood.

112. (New) The method of claim 111, further comprising the additional steps of:

establishing one or more plenary asset categories for each of said asset categories;

utilizing one or more features of said asset, classifying said asset such that said asset is described by one of said plenary asset categories;

assigning a fifth identifier to said asset; and

searching said storage device for said asset information utilizing said first identifier, said second identifier, said third identifier, said fourth identifier and said fifth identifier.

113. (New) The method of claim 112, further comprising the step of:

combining said first identifier, said second identifier, said third identifier, said fourth identifier and said fifth identifier to create an asset identifier code.

114. (New) The method of claim 112, wherein said plenary asset categories are selected from the group consisting of 1750 through 1800 and 1850 through 1900.

115. (New) A computer system for classifying tangible assets comprising:

a processing unit capable of establishing one or more asset categories, said processing unit being further capable of utilizing one or more features of said asset to classify said asset such that said asset is substantially described by one of said asset categories and assigning a first identifier to said asset.

116. (New) The computer system of claim 115, further comprising a storage device capable of storing asset information, said storage device coupled to said processing unit, said processing unit being further defined as being capable of storing said asset information within said storage device and searching said storage device for said asset information utilizing said first identifier.

117. (New) The computer system of claim 116, wherein said asset categories are selected from the group consisting of fine art, decorative art, antiquities, other discrete disciplines and collectibles.

118. (New) The computer system of claim 117, wherein said processing unit is further defined as being capable of establishing one or more secondary asset categories for each of said asset

categories, said processing unit further defined as being capable of utilizing one or more features of said asset to classify said asset such that said asset is described by one of said secondary asset categories, assigning a second identifier to said asset and searching said storage device for said asset information utilizing said first identifier and said second identifier.

119. (New) The computer system of claim 118, wherein said processing unit is further defined as being capable of combining said first identifier and said second identifier to create an asset identifier code.

120. (New) The computer system of claim 119, wherein said secondary asset categories are selected from the group consisting of paintings, sculpture, works on paper, tapestries, furniture, decorations, couture, ephemera, textiles, ancient near east, Egyptian, Etruscan/Roman, early church, Greek/Hellenistic, pre-Columbian, pre-history, arms & armor, Asian art, books/bindings/manuscripts/signatures/maps, carpets, clocks/timepieces/scientific instruments, contemporary forms in media & action, Islamic art, Judaica, tribal art, animation & comic art, coins, geophysical & mineral, sports memorabilia, stamps, toys, vintage cars, and wines.

121. (New) The computer system of claim 120, wherein said processing unit is further defined as being capable of establishing one or more tertiary asset categories for each of said asset categories, said processing unit further defined as being capable of utilizing one or more features of said asset to classify said asset such that said asset is described by one of said tertiary asset categories, assigning a third identifier to said asset and searching said storage device for said asset information utilizing said first identifier, said second identifier and said third identifier.

122. (New) The computer system of claim 121, wherein said processing unit is further defined as being capable of combining said first identifier, said second identifier and said third identifier to create an asset identifier code.

123. (New) The computer system of claim 121, wherein said tertiary asset categories are selected from the group consisting of American through the 19th century, English through the 19th century, French through the 19th century, other continental through the 19th century, contemporary, modernist 20th century masterworks, illuminations & incunabula, Latin America, mannerist, medieval, old master, renaissance, Late Roman/Gothic & Medieval, garden sculpture, drawings, watercolors, photographs, the other print media, costumes, accessories, precious/other jewelry, fine art, coinage, articles of daily life, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, Central and Southeast Asian, American Indian art, African art, and oceanic art.

124. (New) The computer system of claim 123, wherein said processing unit is further defined as being capable of establishing one or more quandary asset categories for each of said asset categories, said processing unit further defined as being capable of utilizing one or more features of said asset to classify said asset such that said asset is described by one of said quandary asset categories, assigning a fourth identifier to said asset and searching said storage device for said asset information utilizing said first identifier, said second identifier, said third identifier and said fourth identifier.

125. (New) The computer system of claim 124, wherein said processing unit is further defined as being capable of combining said first identifier, said second identifier, said third identifier and said fourth identifier to create an asset identifier code.

126. (New) The computer system of claim 124, wherein said quandary asset categories are selected from the group consisting of American School, old master, other, ceramic, precious metal work/other metal work, stone work, glass and wood.

127. (New) The computer system of claim 125, wherein said processing unit is further defined as being capable of establishing one or more plenary asset categories for each of said asset categories, said processing unit further defined as being capable of utilizing one or more features of said asset to classify said asset such that said asset is described by one of said plenary asset categories, assigning a fifth identifier to said asset and searching said storage device for said asset information utilizing said first identifier, said second identifier, said third identifier, said fourth identifier and said fifth identifier.

128. (New) The computer system of claim 127, wherein said processing unit is further defined as being capable of combining said first identifier, said second identifier, said third identifier, said fourth identifier and said fifth identifier to create an asset identifier code.

129. (New) The method of claim 127, wherein said plenary asset categories are selected from the group consisting of 1750 through 1800 and 1850 through 1900.

Following entry of these claims, please cancel claims 1-99.

REMARKS

Applicant has added new claims 100-129. Claims 1-99 have been cancelled. Applicant has submitted a substitute specification with an accompanying no new matter statement. In view of these amendments, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration.

Applicant respectfully requests a refund of fees taken from this firm's deposit account, #07-2400, for claims in the application filed on January 14, 2002 that have been cancelled by preliminary amendment. Specifically, the original application as filed on January 14, 2002 contained a total of 99 claims. Claims 1-99 have been cancelled and new claims 100-129 have been submitted. With the cancellation of the original claims, applicant requests that a refund in the amount of $621.00 be posted to our deposit account as provided under 37 CFR §1.26 and MPEP §607.02.

Respectfully submitted,
JACKSON WALKER L.L.P.

William Nash

William B. Nash, Reg. No. 33,743
112 E. Pecan Street, Suite 2100
San Antonio, Texas 78205
Phone: (210) 978-7700
Fax: (210) 978-7790
Attorneys for Applicant

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited on the date shown below with the United States Postal Service, with sufficient postage as First Class Mail (37 CFR 1.8(a)), in an envelope addressed to Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231.

Date: 4-9-02

Bianca Grossweiler

Bianca Grossweiler

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

[0001] This patent [Patent] application claims priority from a provisional application entitled "A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CLASSIFYING TANGIBLE ASSETS," Serial No. 60/261,385, having a filing date of January 12, 2001.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

[0002] The classification code [of] utilized by the present invention, included as part of the specification, contains material which is subject to copyright protection. The copyright owner has no objection to the facsimile reproduction of this material as it appears in the United States Patent and Trademark patent files or records, but otherwise reserves all copyright rights whatsoever.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION [BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION]

[0003] The present invention relates generally to a classification system and more particularly to a [classification code] method and system for classifying tangible art objects.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] Classification systems such as the Dewey Decimal System and the Library of Congress classification system have been in existence for some time. To classify each item, each work is divided into separate categories and assigned an alpha-numeric identifier. This allows each work

to be shelved in a predetermined location such that the status of each work may be readily determined.

[0005] Other products have classified an item so that it may be compared to similar items such that its value may be estimated. Products such as the Kelly Blue Book have been used to assess the value of mass produced items, such as automobiles, using input data such as model year, body condition, and mileage.

[0006] The prior art has attempted to apply the above methodologies to tangible assets such as art objects, but with little economic or statistical success. The materials, method of construction, authenticity, condition, and provenance seen in an original, one-of-a-kind art object cannot be valued with a reasonable degree of certainty with non-subjective factors alone. Art objects rely to a greater extent upon subjective assessment by scholars, critics, connoisseurs, and curators such that a valuation of an art object must take into account not only current subjective data but also data that spans years into the past.

[0007] The [classification code of the] present invention allows for the classification of art objects in a manner that provides stability to the valuation process and to economic and statistical consistency. The present invention is designed to classify art objects using a comprehensive asset class structure premised on curatorial and operational requirements.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] Accordingly, the present invention is a new and innovative manner of classifying tangible assets that can, in addition, provide access to a plurality of independently moving market trajectories within the art economy. The present invention provides a definitive reporting standard for measuring and tracking the marketplace performance of fine art, decorative art, antiquities, other discrete disciplines, and collectibles. This allows collectors, dealers, auctioneers, bankers, asset managers, and legal advisors assess financial risk and to manage and track the value and cross-generational transfer of art objects.

[0009] [The asset is classified using] The present invention utilizes a unique classification code which divides tangible art objects such as fine art, decorative art, antiquities, other discrete disciplines, and collectibles into order, family, genus, species, and sub-species categories. [This classification] Categories assigned to a given asset may then be cross-referenced with relevant auction house data, including art objects that were offered for sale but failed to find buyers, to define market trajectories and help determine fair market value. [Relevant] In one embodiment, relevant asset data may be weighted for risk against pre-sale estimates [and], venue performance and other risk factors as well as discounted to diminish the past effects of extreme or irrational behavior on the part of buyers on the auction floor.

[0010] The [classification code of the] present invention allows tangible art objects to be classified into [the above] a series of categories and assigned a series of identifiers such that the asset may be cross referenced with relevant data stored upon a database to track worldwide market performance of specific types of categorized assets. Historic market performance

patterns may be graphed and cross-referenced to well known standards such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500), among others, to ensure statistical reliability.

[0011] By [providing] utilizing a uniform and statistically sound method of classifying art objects, the present invention not only provides financial institutions with the consistent taxonomy they require for conducting rigorous risk analysis for lending purposes, it also provides a standard nomenclature for classifying art objects. Specifically, the present invention allows the value of an art object to be determined with greater accuracy such that lenders may set advance rates more precisely, thus decreasing risk to financial intermediaries.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] Fig. 1 illustrates an embodiment of the present invention utilizing a computer system.

[0013] Fig. 2A illustrates the [classification code] fine art asset category of one embodiment of the present invention.

[0014] Fig. [3] 2B illustrates [an] the decorative art asset category of one embodiment of the present invention [utilizing a computer readable medium].

[0015] Fig. 2C illustrates the antiquities, other discrete disciplines and collectibles asset categories of one embodiment of the present invention.

[Fig. 4 is a] **[0016]** Figs. 3A – 3M are flowchart diagrams illustrating [an] one embodiment of the tangible asset classification process of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE [PREFERRED EMBODIMENT] INVENTION

[0017] The present invention is herein described [as a classification code (100) that can be used to access and sort asset data, thus allowing a computer system to classify tangible assets, a computer readable medium comprising a plurality of instructions for classifying tangible assets, and] as a method for classifying tangible assets[, as shown in the Figures] and as a computer system for classifying tangible assets.

[Computer System]

[0018] Referring to [Figs] Fig. 1 [and 2,], the classification of tangible assets may be instituted by any suitable electronic device such as a computer system (10). In one embodiment, the computer system of the present invention has at least one database (12) for storing information for each given asset and for storing information concerning each category of assets. The term "database" is used throughout this document to describe anything used to collect and/or organize data. This includes, but is not limited to, a computer, card catalog, hard copy file, electronic file, email storage device, and/or electronic memory device. In one embodiment, the database (12) is [an electronic device] searchable by a processing unit (14) coupled to the database (12). The database being capable of storing asset information describing a plurality of assets according to one or more identifiers. Asset information may be entered into the computer system (10) using an input device (not shown) such as a mouse or keyboard. Asset information may be transmitted through local or wide area networks (15) or the internet (15) so that it may be readily updated and available to remote users (17).

[0019] Referring to Figs. 1, 2A, 2B and 2C, the processing unit (14) of the present invention is capable of establishing one or more order asset categories (16) for use in classifying tangible assets. In one embodiment, these categories (16) include fine art, decorative art, antiquities, other discrete disciplines and collectibles. Once order categories have been established, the processing unit (14) of the present invention is capable of utilizing input data regarding a given asset to classify the asset into an order category (16). A first identifier (26) is assigned to the given asset according to which order category best describes the given asset. The present invention is capable of searching the database (12) of the present invention utilizing the first identifier assigned to the given asset to retrieve asset information for assets having the same first identifier (26).

[The] **[0020]** To enhance the searching abilities of the present invention, the processing unit (14) is capable of establishing [each category of] family, genus, species and sub-species categories (18, 20, 22 and 24, respectively) for use in further classifying the [classification system of the present invention] given asset as described further below. [These categories include order] The processing unit ([16]14) of the present invention identifies each category with an identifier. In one embodiment, a first identifier (26) is used for each order category (16), a second identifier (28) is used for each family category (18), a third identifier (30) is used for each genus category (20), a fourth identifier (32) is used for each species category (22), and a fifth identifier (34) is used for each sub-species category (24) [groups. The present invention]. These identifiers may be letters, numbers, or any other textual or graphical information. Once a given asset is [especially useful] classified into each applicable category, the first, second, third,

fourth, and fifth identifiers (26, 28, 30, 32 and 34, respectively) may be combined to form an identifier code, as described further below. The identifier code provides a common reference such that information gathered for [classifying art objects] assets having the same identifiers may be quickly and easily compared with the given asset. [The] Specifically, the present invention allows the value of a given art object to be evaluated using stored information describing other assets [of] having the same identifier code[, as described below]. The present invention establishes a consistent framework to allow data to be sorted and compiled so that lenders may assess the risk of an art object and set advance rates more precisely, thus decreasing risk and enhancing asset value.

[Referring to Figs. 1 and 2, once the categories are established, the processing unit (14) identifies each category with an identifier. Specifically, a first identifier (26) is used for each order category (16), a second identifier (28) is used for each family category (18), a third identifier (30) is used for each genus category (20), a fourth identifier (32) is used for each species category (22), and a fifth category (34) is used for each sub-species category (24). These identifiers may be letters, numbers, or any other textual or graphical information. Once a given asset is classified into each category, the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth identifiers (26, 28, 30, 32 and 34, respectively) are combined to form an identifier code, as described below. This provides a common reference such that information gathered for assets having the same identifier code may be quickly and easily compared with the given asset.

Once the categories have been established and identifiers have been assigned, the processing unit (14) is capable of analyzing input data concerning a given asset so that it may determine which categories apply to the given asset. When this is determined, the given asset is designated as having a specific order, family, genus, species, and subspecies category (16, 18, 20, 22 and 24, respectively). The applicable first, second, third, fourth, and fifth identifiers (26, 28, 30, 32 and 34, respectively) are then assigned to the given asset.

This information may be sent to the database (12) for storage, and/or used to conduct comparisons between the given asset and other assets having the same identifier code. This is done using valuation information stored in the database (12) to determine the market risk of the given asset. Valuation information may be entered into the computer system (10) using an input device (not shown) such as a mouse or keyboard. Asset information may be transmitted through local or wide area networks or the internet so that it may be readily available anywhere.

Computer Readable Medium]

[0021] Referring to Figs. [2 and 3,] 3A – 3M, the present invention may also be described as a [computer readable medium (150) that uses a plurality of instructions used to classify] method for classifying tangible assets. [These instructions are read by an electronic device, such as a computer, such that they cause] Figs. 3A – 3M illustrate one embodiment of the [computer to perform various] tangible asset classification [steps] process of the present invention.

[Order Categories

First, the computer (10] **[0022]** Referring to Fig. 3A, one or more order asset categories (16) [is instructed to receive information concerning] are established by the present invention. Specifically, utilizing one or more features of a given asset[. This information may then] to be examined, the asset is classified according to which order category best describes the asset. Third, the asset is assigned a first identifier (26). In one embodiment, the first identifier (26) assigned to the given asset is stored in a database (12) [that is coupled to the computer]. The term "database" is used throughout this document to describe anything used to collect and/or organize data. This includes, but is not limited to, a computer, card catalog, [hard copy] hardcopy file, electronic file, email storage device, and/or electronic memory [devices] device.

[In one embodiment, the database (12) is an electronic device used in conjunction with a computer.

Second, the computer is instructed]

[0023] Once the asset has been classified according to [establish] one [or more order categories (16) for use in broadly classifying the given asset. Third, the computer (10) is instructed to identify each order category (16) with a first identifier (26). Fourth, the computer (10) is instructed to determine, based upon the stored information concerning the given asset, what order category (16) describes the given asset. In one embodiment, four order categories (16) are established by the computer (10) at the instruction] of the [computer readable medium (150). Once the applicable] order [category (16) is determined, the computer (10) is instructed to designate the given] asset [as being described by the applicable order category (16)] categories and a first identifier [(26) corresponding to the applicable order category is] has been assigned [to], the [given] present invention is capable of performing searches of the database (12) for stored asset[, as described below] information utilizing the assigned first identifier. This asset information may then be used to cross reference the given asset with other assets such that the asset may be valued. This asset information may be transmitted through a computer network so that such comparisons may be made worldwide.

[In] **[0024]** Referring to Figs. 2A, 2B, 2C and 3A, in one embodiment of the present invention, the order categories are Fine Art, Decorative Art, Antiquities, Other Discrete Disciplines, and Collectibles. In [this] one embodiment, "001" is used as the first identifier for the Fine Art order category, "002" is used as the first identifier for the Decorative Art category,

"003" is used as the first identifier for the Antiquities category, "004" is used as the first identifier for the Other Discrete Disciplines category, and "005" is used as the first identifier for the Collectibles category.

[Family Categories

The computer (10) may then be instructed to establish] **[0025]** In one embodiment, one or more family categories (18) may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. It is then determined, based upon one or more features of the given asset, what family [categories] category (18) [for use in further classifying] describes the given asset. Once Family categories have been established, the [computer] given [(10)] asset is [instructed to identify each family category (18) with] assigned a second identifier (28). [The computer (10) is then instructed to determine, based upon the stored information concerning the given asset, what family category describes the given asset. Once the applicable family category (18) is determined, the computer (10) is instructed to designate the given asset as being described by the applicable family category and the second identifier (28) corresponding to the applicable family category is assigned to the given asset.

In] **[0026]** Referring to Figs 2A and 3A, in one embodiment, the Fine Art order category includes four family categories each having a second identifier. In one embodiment, these categories include Paintings having a second identifier of "001", Sculpture "002", Works on Paper "003", and Tapestries "004". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category and a Tapestries family category would be designated by first and second identifiers of "001.004".

[In] **[0027]** Referring to Figs 2B and 3C, in one embodiment, the Decorative Art order category includes five family categories each having a second identifier. These categories include Furniture "001", Decorations "002", Couture "003", Ephemera "004", and Textiles "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category and a Textiles family category would be designated by "002.005".

[In] **[0028]** Referring to Figs 2C and 3E, in one embodiment, the Antiquities order category includes seven family categories each having a second identifier. These categories include Ancient Near East "001", Egyptian "002", Etruscan, Roman "003", Early Church "004", Greek & Hellenistic "005", Pre-Columbian "006", and Pre-History "007". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Antiquities order category and an Egyptian family category would be designated by "003.002".

[In] **[0029]** Referring to Figs 2C and 3F, in one embodiment, the Other Discrete Disciplines order category includes nine family categories each having a second identifier. These categories include Arms & Armor "001", Asian Art "002", Books, Bindings, Manuscripts, Signatures, & Maps "003", Carpets "004", Clocks, Timepieces and Scientific Instruments "005", Contemporary Forms in Media & Action "006", Islamic Art "007", Judaica "008", and Tribal Art "009". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Other Discrete Disciplines order category and an Carpets family category would be designated by "004.004". [illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Other Discrete Disciplines order category and a Carpets family category would be designated by "004.004".

In] **[0030]** Referring to Figs 2C and 3G, in one embodiment, the Collectibles order category includes eight family categories each having a second identifier. These categories include Animation & Comic Art "001", Coins "002", Geophysical & Mineral "003", Sports Memorabilia "004", Stamps"005", Toys "006", and Vintage Cars "007", and Wines "008". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Collectibles order category and a Wines family category would be designated by "005.008".

[Genus Categories]

[0031] Once the asset has been classified according to an order and family asset category and first and second identifiers have been assigned, the present invention may store same within the database (12). The database (12) may then be searched using the first and second identifiers in order to retrieve asset information stored therein. This asset information may then be utilized to value the given asset, as described above.

[The computer (10) may then be instructed to establish] **[0032]** In one embodiment, one or more genus categories (20) may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. It is then determined, based upon one or more features of the given asset, what genus [categories] category (20) [for use in further classifying] describes the given asset. Once genus categories have been established, the [computer (10) is instructed to identify each genus category (20) with a third identifier (30). The computer (10) is then instructed to determine, based upon the stored information concerning the given asset, what genus category (20) describes the] given asset[. Once the applicable genus category is determined, the computer (10) is instructed to designate the given asset as being described by the applicable genus category (20) and the third identifier

(30) corresponding to the applicable genus category] is assigned [to the given asset] a third identifier (30).

[In] **[0033]** Referring to Figs 2A, 3B and 3K, in one embodiment, the Paintings family category includes twelve genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American through 19th century "001", English through 19th century "002", French through 19th century "003", Other Continental through 19th century "004", Contemporary "005", Modernist 20th [Century] century Masterworks "006", Illuminations & Incunabula "007", Latin America "008", Mannerist "009", Medieval "010", Old Master "011", and Renaissance "012". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, and a Mannerist genus category would be designated by "001.001.009".

[In] **[0034]** Referring to Figs 2A and 3H, in one embodiment, the Sculpture family category includes nine genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American through 19th century "001", English through 19th century "002", French through 19th century "003", Other Continental through 19th century "004", Contemporary "005", Modernist 20th century Masterworks "006", Late Roman, Gothic & Medieval "007", Renaissance "008", and Garden Sculpture "009". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Sculpture family category, and a Garden Sculpture genus category would be designated by "001.002.009".

[In one embodiment, the Works on Paper family category includes six genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Drawings “001”, Watercolors “002”, Photographs “003”, The Other Print Media “004”, Contemporary “005”, and]

[0035] Referring to Figs 2A and 3I, in one embodiment, the Works on Paper family category includes six genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Drawings “001”, Watercolors “002”, Photographs “003”, The other print media “004”, Contemporary “005”, and Modernist 20th century Masterworks “006”. To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Works on Paper family category, and a photographs genus category would be designated by first, second, and third identifiers of “001.003.003”.

[In one embodiment] **[0036]** Referring to Figs 2B and 3C, in one embodiment, the Furniture family category within the Decorative Art order category includes five genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American through 19th century “001[”, English through 19th century “002”]”, English through 19th century “002”, French through 19th century “003”, Other Continental through 19th century “004”, and Modernist 20th century Masterworks “005”. To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Furniture family category, and a Other Continental through 19th century genus category would be designated by “002.001.004”.

[0037] Referring to Figs 2B, 3C and 3L, in one embodiment, the Decorations family category within the Decorative Art order category includes five genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American through 19th century “001”, English through 19th

century "002", French through 19th century "003[", Other Continental through 19th century "004", and Modernist 20th century Masterworks "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative art order category, a Furniture family category, and a Other Continental through 19th century genus category would be designated by "002.001.004".]", Other Continental through 19th century "004", and Modernist 20th century Masterworks "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Decorations family category, and an Other Continental through 19th century genus category would be designated by "002.002.004".

[In one embodiment, the Decorations family category within the Decorative Art order category includes five genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American through 19th century "001", English through 19th century "002", French through 19th century "003", Other Continental through 19th century "004", and Modernist 20th century Masterworks "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative art order category, a Decorations family category, and a Other Continental through 19th century genus category would be designated by "002.002.004".

In] **[0038]** Referring to Figs 2B, 3C and 3M, in one embodiment, the Couture family category within the Decorative Art order category includes three genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Costumes "001", Accessories "002", and Jewelry: Precious and Other "003". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Couture family category, and a Costumes genus category would be designated by "002.003.001".

[In] **[0039]** Referring to Figs 2C and 3E, in one embodiment, the Ancient Near East, Egyptian, Etruscan / Roman, Early Church or Greek & Hellenistic family categories within the

Antiquities order category include three genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Fine Art "001", Coinage "002", and Articles of Daily Life "003". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Antiquities order category, an Egyptian family category, and a Fine Art genus category would be designated by "003.002.001".

[0040] In one embodiment, the Pre-Columbian family category within the Antiquities order category include two genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Fine Art "001" and Articles of Daily Life "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Antiquities order category, a Pre-Columbian family category, and a Fine Art genus category would be designated by "003.006.001".

[In] **[0041]** Referring to Figs 2C and 3F, in one embodiment, the Asian Art family category within the Other Discrete Disciplines order category includes five genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Chinese "001", Japanese "002", Korean "003", Indian "004", and Central & Southeast Asian "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Couture family category, and a Costumes genus category would be designated by "002.003.001".

[In] **[0042]** Referring to Figs 2C and 3F, in one embodiment, the Tribal Art family category within the Other Discrete Disciplines order category includes three genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American Indian Art "001", African Art "002", and Oceanic Art "003". To illustrate[, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Other Discrete Disciplines order category, a Tribal Art family category, and an African Art genus category would be designated by "004.008.002".], the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Other Discrete Disciplines order category, a Tribal Art family category, and a African Art genus category would be designated by "004.008.002".

[Species Categories]

[0043] Once the asset has been classified according to an order, family, and genus asset category and first, second and third identifiers have been assigned, the present invention may store same within the database (12). The database (12) may then be searched using the first, second and third identifiers in order to retrieve asset information stored therein. This asset information may then be utilized to value the given asset, as described above.

[The computer may then be instructed to establish] **[0044]** In one embodiment, one or more species [categories (22) for use in further classifying the given asset. Once Species] categories (22) [have been] may then be established[,] such that the [computer (10) is instructed to identify each Species category with a fourth identifier (32)] given asset may be further classified. [The computer (10)] It is then [instructed to determine] determined, based upon [the stored information concerning] one or more features of the given asset, what [Species] species category (22) describes the given asset. Once [the applicable Species category is determined] species categories (22) have been established, the [computer (10)] given asset [as being described by the applicable Species category (22) and the is instructed to designate the] is assigned a fourth identifier (32) [corresponding to the applicable Species category (22) is assigned to the given asset].

[0045] Referring [further] to [Fig. 2,] Figs 2A, 3A, 3B and 3K, in one embodiment, the American through 19th century genus category having a Paintings family category includes three species categories each having a fourth identifier. These categories include American School "001", Itinerant Painters "002", and Impressionists "003". To illustrate, the identifier code of a

given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, an American through 19th century genus category, and an American School species category would be designated by "001.001.001.001".

[0046] In one embodiment, the English through 19th century genus category having a Paintings family category includes one species category having a fourth identifier. This category includes Victorian "001". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, an English through 19th century genus category, and a Victorian species category would be designated by "001.001.002.001".

[0047] In one embodiment, the French through 19th century genus category having a Paintings family category includes two species categories each having a fourth identifier. These categories include Barbizon School "001" and Impressionists "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, a French through 19th century genus category, and an Impressionists species category would be designated by "001.001.003.002".

[0048] In one embodiment, the Modernist 20th century Masterworks genus category having a Paintings family category includes one species category having a fourth identifier. This category includes American "001". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, a Modernist 20th century Masterworks genus category, and an American species category would be designated by "001.001.006.001".

[In one embodiment] **[0049]** Referring to Figs 2A, 3A, 3B and 3H, in one embodiment, the French through 19th century genus category having a Sculpture family category includes one species category having a fourth identifier. This category includes 19th [Century] century "001". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Sculpture family category, a French through 19th century genus category, and a 19th century species category would be designated by "001.002.003.001".

[In] **[0050]** Referring to Figs 2A, 3A, 3B and 3I, in one embodiment, the Drawings genus category having a Works on Paper family category includes two species categories each having a fourth identifier. These categories include Old Master "001" and Other "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Works on Paper family category, Drawings genus category, and an Old Master species category would be designated by "001.003.001.001".

[In] **[0051]** Referring to Figs 2B, 3A and 3C, in one embodiment, the American through 19th century, English through 19th century, and French through 19th century genus categories located within the Furniture family category each include one species category having a fourth identifier. This category includes Seat & Case "001". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Furniture family category, an American through 19th century genus category, and a Seat & Case species category would be designated by "002.001.001.001".

[0052] In one embodiment, the American through 19th century, English through 19th century, French through 19th century, and Other Continental through 19th century genus categories located within the Decorations family category each include five species categories each having a fourth identifier. These categories include Ceramic "001", Metalwork: Precious & Other "002", Stonework "003", Glass "004" and Wood "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Decorations family category, an American through 19th century genus category, and a Wood species category would be designated by "002.002.001.005".

[Sub-Species Categories

The computer (10) may then be instructed to establish one or more sub-species categories (24) for use in further classifying]

[0053] Once [sub-species categories (24) have been established] the [given] asset[.] has been classified according to an order, family, genus and species asset category and first, second, third and fourth identifiers have been assigned, the [computer (10) is instructed to identify each sub-species category with a fifth identifier (34). The computer (10) is then instructed to determine, based upon] present invention may store same within the [stored information concerning the given asset, what sub-species category describes the given asset. Once the applicable sub-species category (24) is determined, the computer (10) is instructed to designate the given asset as being described by the applicable sub-species category (24) and the fifth identifier (34) corresponding to the applicable sub-species category is assigned to the given asset.

Referring further to Fig 2, in one embodiment, the American School species category includes two sub-species categories each having a fifth identifier. These categories include 1850 through 1900, designated by "001" and Hudson River School "002". To illustrate, the identifier

code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, an American through 19th century genus category, an American School species category and a Hudson River School sub-species category would be designated by "001.001.001.001.002".

In one embodiment, the 19th Century species category includes two sub-species categories each having a fifth identifier. These categories include Metalwork "001" and Stonework "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Sculpture family category, an French through 19th century genus category, a 19th century species category and a Metalwork sub-species category would be designated by "001.002.003.001.001".

In one embodiment, the Seat & Case species category located within either the American through 19th century, English through 19th century, or French through 19th century genus categories each include one sub-species category having a fifth identifier. This category includes 1750 through 1800, designated by "001" and Hudson River School "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Furniture family category, an American through 19th century genus category, a Seat & Case species category and a 1750 through 1800 sub-species category would be designated by "002.001.001.001.001".

The identifier code assigned to a given asset may be compiled by a database for storage, and/or used to conduct comparisons between the given asset and other assets having the same identifier code. This is accomplished using valuation information that may be stored in the database. Valuation information pertaining to assets having the same identifier code as the given asset may be cross referenced and compared to determine potential variation of its fair market

value. Asset information may be transmitted through local or wide area networks or the internet so that it may be readily available anywhere.

Methods of Classifying Tangible Assets

Referring to the flowchart of Fig. 4, the present invention may also be described as a method for classifying tangible assets. Fig. 4 illustrates an embodiment of the tangible asset classification process of the present invention.

The present invention allows a given asset to be classified by following a few simple steps. A] database (12). The database (12) may then be [used or accessed by] searched using the [present invention] first, second, third and fourth identifiers in order to [allow] retrieve asset information stored therein. This asset information may then be utilized to value the [storage of information used to classify each] given asset, as described above. [The term "database" is used throughout this document to describe anything used to collect and/or organize data. This includes, but is not limited to, a computer, card catalog, hard copy file, electronic file, email storage device, and/or electronic memory devices.

Order Categories

First, one or more order categories (16) are established within the database. Second, each order category is identified with a first identifier (26). Third, it is determined which of the order categories (16) best describes the asset to be classified (the given asset). Fourth, the given asset is designated within the database as being described by an applicable order category (16). Fifth, the first identifier (26) corresponding to the applicable order category (16) is assigned to the given asset, as described below.

Referring back to Fig. 2, in one embodiment of the present invention, the order categories are Fine Art, Decorative Art, Antiquities, Other Discrete Disciplines, and Collectibles. In this embodiment, "001" is used as the first identifier for the Fine Art order category, "002" is used as

the first identifier for the Decorative Art category, "003" is used as the first identifier for the Antiquities category, "004" is used as the first identifier for the Other Discrete Disciplines category, and "005" is used as the first identifier for the Collectibles category.

Family Categories

In one embodiment, one or more family categories (18) may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. Once Family categories have been established, each family category is identified with a second identifier (28). It is then determined, based upon stored information concerning the given asset, what family category (18) describes the given asset. Once the applicable family category is determined, the given asset is designated as being described by the applicable family category. The second identifier (28) corresponding to the applicable family category may then be assigned to the given asset.

In one embodiment, the Fine Art order category includes four family categories each having a second identifier. In one embodiment, these categories include Paintings having a second identifier of "001", Sculpture "002", Works on Paper "003", and Tapestries "004". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category and a Tapestries family category would be designated by first and second identifiers of "001.004".

In one embodiment, the Decorative Art order category includes five family categories each having a second identifier. These categories include Furniture "001", Decorations "002", Couture "003", Ephemera "004", and Textiles "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category and a Textiles family category would be designated by "002.005".

In one embodiment, the Antiquities order category includes seven family categories each having a second identifier. These categories include Ancient Near East "001", Egyptian "002", Etruscan, Roman "003", Early Church "004", Greek & Hellenistic "005", Pre-Columbian "006",

and Pre-History "007". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Antiquities order category and an Egyptian family category would be designated by "003.002".

In one embodiment, the Other Discrete Disciplines order category includes nine family categories each having a second identifier. These categories include Arms & Armor "001", Asian Art "002", Books, Bindings, Manuscripts, Signatures, & Maps "003", Carpets "004", Clocks, Timepieces and Scientific Instruments "005", Contemporary Forms in Media & Action "006", Islamic Art "007", Judaica "008", and Tribal Art "009". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Other Discrete Disciplines order category and an Carpets family category would be designated by "004.004".

In one embodiment, the Collectibles order category includes eight family categories each having a second identifier. These categories include Animation & Comic Art "001", Coins "002", Geophysical & Mineral "003", Sports Memorabilia "004", Stamps"005", Toys "006", and Vintage Cars "007", and Wines "008". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Collectibles order category and a Wines family category would be designated by "005.008".

Genus Categories

In one embodiment, one or more genus categories (20) may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. Once genus categories have been established, each genus category is identified with a third identifier (30). It is then determined, based upon the stored information concerning the given asset, what genus category (20) describes the given asset. Once the applicable genus category is determined, the given asset is designated as being described by the applicable genus category. The third identifier (30) corresponding to the applicable genus category (20), may then be assigned to the given asset.

Referring further to Fig. 2, in one embodiment, the Paintings family category includes twelve genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American through 19th century "001", English through 19th century "002", French through 19th century "003", Other Continental through 19th century "004", Contemporary "005", Modernist 20th century Masterworks "006", Illuminations & Incunabula "007", Latin America "008", Mannerist "009", Medieval "010", Old Master "011", and Renaissance "012". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, and a Mannerist genus category would be designated by "001.001.009".

In one embodiment, the Sculpture family category includes nine genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American through 19th century "001", English through 19th century "002", French through 19th century "003", Other Continental through 19th century "004", Contemporary "005", Modernist 20th century Masterworks "006", Late Roman, Gothic & Medieval "007", Renaissance "008", and Garden Sculpture "009". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Sculpture family category, and a Garden Sculpture genus category would be designated by "001.002.009".

In one embodiment, the Works on Paper family category includes six genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Drawings "001", Watercolors "002", Photographs "003", The other print media "004", Contemporary "005", and Modernist 20th century Masterworks "006". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Works on Paper family category, and a photographs genus category would be designated by first, second, and third identifiers of "001.003.003".

In one embodiment, the Furniture family category within the Decorative Art order category includes five genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include

American through 19th century "001", English through 19th century "002", French through 19th century "003", Other Continental through 19th century "004", and Modernist 20th century Masterworks "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Furniture family category, and a Other Continental through 19th century genus category would be designated by "002.001.004".

In one embodiment, the Decorations family category within the Decorative Art order category includes five genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American through 19th century "001", English through 19th century "002", French through 19th century "003", Other Continental through 19th century "004", and Modernist 20th century Masterworks "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Decorations family category, and an Other Continental through 19th century genus category would be designated by "002.002.004".

In one embodiment, the Couture family category within the Decorative Art order category includes three genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Costumes "001", Accessories "002", and Jewelry: Precious and Other "003". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Couture family category, and a Costumes genus category would be designated by "002.003.001".

In one embodiment, the Ancient Near East, Egyptian, Etruscan / Roman, Early Church or Greek & Hellenistic family categories within the Antiquities order category include three genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Fine Art "001", Coinage "002", and Articles of Daily Life "003". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Antiquities order category, an Egyptian family category, and a Fine Art genus category would be designated by "003.002.001".

In one embodiment, the Pre-Columbian family category within the Antiquities order category include two genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Fine Art "001" and Articles of Daily Life "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Antiquities order category, a Pre-Columbian family category, and a Fine Art genus category would be designated by "003.006.001".

In one embodiment, the Asian Art family category within the Other Discrete Disciplines order category includes five genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include Chinese "001", Japanese "002", Korean "003", Indian "004", and Central & Southeast Asian "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Couture family category, and a Costumes genus category would be designated by "002.003.001".

In one embodiment, the Tribal Art family category within the Other Discrete Disciplines order category includes three genus categories each having a third identifier. These categories include American Indian Art "001", African Art "002", and Oceanic Art "003". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have an Other Discrete Disciplines order category, a Tribal Art family category, and a African Art genus category would be designated by "004.008.002".

Species Categories

In one embodiment, one or more species categories (22) may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. Once species categories (22) have been established, each species category is identified with a fourth identifier (32). It is then determined, based upon the stored information concerning the given asset, what species category (22) describes the given asset. Once the applicable species category is determined, the given asset is designated as being

described by the applicable species category. The fourth identifier (32) corresponding to the applicable species category (22) may then be assigned to the given asset.

In one embodiment, the American through 19th century genus category having a Paintings family category includes three species categories each having a fourth identifier. These categories include American School "001", Itinerant Painters "002", and Impressionists "003". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, an American through 19th century genus category, and an American School species category would be designated by "001.001.001.001".

In one embodiment, the English through 19th century genus category having a Paintings family category includes one species category having a fourth identifier. This category includes Victorian "001". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, an English through 19th century genus category, and a Victorian species category would be designated by "001.001.002.001".

In one embodiment, the French through 19th century genus category having a Paintings family category includes two species categories each having a fourth identifier. These categories include Barbizon School "001" and Impressionists "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, a French through 19th century genus category, and an Impressionists species category would be designated by "001.001.003.002".

In one embodiment, the Modernist 20th century Masterworks genus category having a Paintings family category includes one species category having a fourth identifier. This category includes American "001". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a

Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, a Modernist 20th century Masterworks genus category, and an American species category would be designated by "001.001.006.001".

In one embodiment, the French through 19th century genus category having a Sculpture family category includes one species category having a fourth identifier. This category includes 19th century "001". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Sculpture family category, a French through 19th century genus category, and a 19th century species category would be designated by "001.002.003.001".

In one embodiment, the Drawings genus category having a Works on Paper family category includes two species categories each having a fourth identifier. These categories include Old Master "001" and Other "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Works on Paper family category, Drawings genus category, and an Old Master species category would be designated by "001.003.001.001".

In one embodiment, the American through 19th century, English through 19th century, and French through 19th century genus categories located within the Furniture family category each include one species category having a fourth identifier. This category includes Seat & Case "001". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Furniture family category, an American through 19th century genus category, and a Seat & Case species category would be designated by "002.001.001.001".

In one embodiment, the American through 19th century, English through 19th century, French through 19th century, and Other Continental through 19th century genus categories located within the Decorations family category each include five species categories each having a fourth identifier. These categories include Ceramic "001", Metalwork: Precious & Other "002", Stonework "003", Glass "004" and Wood "005". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given

asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Decorations family category, an American through 19th century genus category, and a Wood species category would be designated by "002.002.001.005".

Sub-Species Categories]

[0054] In one embodiment, one or more sub-species categories (24) may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. [Once sub-species categories have been established, each sub-species category is identified with a fifth identifier (34).] It is then determined, based upon [the stored information concerning] one or more features of the given asset, what sub-species category (24) describes the given asset. Once [the applicable] sub-species [category is determined,] categories have been established, the given asset is [designated as being described by the applicable sub-species category (24). The fifth identifier (34) corresponding to the applicable sub-species category may then be] assigned [to the given asset.] a fifth identifier (34).

[In] **[0055]** Referring to Figs 2A, 3A, 3B and 3K, in one embodiment, the American School species category includes two sub-species categories each having a fifth identifier. These categories include 1850 through 1900, designated by "001" and Hudson River School "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Paintings family category, an American through 19th Century genus category, an American School species category and a Hudson River School sub-species category would be designated by "001.001.001.001.002".

[In] **[0056]** Referring to Figs 2A, 3A, 3B and 3H, in one embodiment, the 19th century species category includes two sub-species categories each having a fifth identifier. These categories include Metalwork "001" and Stonework "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category, a Sculpture family category, an French through 19th century genus category, a 19th century species category and a Metalwork sub-species category would be designated by "001.002.003.001.001".

[In] **[0057]** Referring to Figs 2B, 3A, 3C and 3L, in one embodiment, the Seat & Case species category located within either the American through 19th century, English through 19th century, or French through 19th century genus categories each include one sub-species category having a fifth identifier. This category includes 1750 through 1800, designated by "001" and Hudson River School "002". To illustrate, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Decorative Art order category, a Furniture family category, an American through 19th century genus category, a Seat & Case species category and a 1750 through 1800 sub-species category would be designated by "002.001.001.001.001".

[0058] In one embodiment, the identifier code assigned to a given asset may be compiled by a database for storage, and/or used to conduct comparisons between the given asset and other assets having the same identifier codes. This is done using valuation information that may be stored in the database. The valuation information may be cross referenced with the identifier code to determine the fair market value of the given asset. Asset information may be transmitted through local or wide area networks or the internet so that information may be readily available anywhere.

[0059] In another embodiment, the present invention allows for the classification of tangible assets by following a few simple steps. First, a classification hierarchy (100) having a plurality of categories is provided. Second, at least one given asset is classified by generating output that indicates an applicable order category (16) for the given asset.

[0060] The given asset may be further classified by generating output that indicates the applicable family (18), genus, (20), species (22), and sub-species category (24) for the given asset. Each applicable order, family, genus, species, and sub-species category (16, 18, 20, 22 and 24, respectively) may then be assigned first, second, third, fourth, and fifth identifiers (26, 28, 30, 32 and 34, respectively). These assigned identifiers may be combined to form an identifier code which may be used to identify and compare assets of the same classifications.

[0061] The present invention provides even greater accuracy to the classification process by providing an additional one hundred separate and distinct classifications that may be combined with the identifier code. Specifically, the present invention provides a scale (76) of 1 to 100 on the left hand side of the classification code, as illustrated in Figure 2. This additional identifier may be combined with the first, second, third, fourth and fifth identifiers (26, 28, 30, 32 and 34, respectively) of the identifier code to provide further classification of the given asset. In one embodiment, the identifier code of a given asset determined to have a Fine Art order category (16), a Sculpture family category (18), and a Garden Sculpture genus category (20) would be designated by "001.13.002.009", "13" being the additional identifier in the identifier code.

[0062] Although the invention has been described with reference to a specific embodiment, this description is not meant to be construed in a limiting sense. On the contrary, various modifications of the disclosed embodiments will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon reference to the description of the invention. It is therefore contemplated that the appended claims will cover such modifications, alternatives, and equivalents that fall within the true spirit and scope of the invention.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[A method for classifying tangible art objects using a classification code such that the value of a given asset may be readily determined. The basic steps of the classification method of the present invention include providing a database for storage of information regarding a given asset, establishing within the database one or more order categories, identifying each order category with a first identifier, determining which order categories describes the given asset, designating the given asset as being classified by the order category which best describes the given asset in the database, and assigning the applicable first identifier to the given asset.

One or more family categories may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. Once family categories have been established, each family category is identified with a second identifier. It is then determined, based upon the stored information concerning the given asset, what family category describes the given asset. Once the applicable family category is determined, the given asset is designated as being described by the applicable family category. The second identifier corresponding to the applicable family category may then be assigned to the given asset and the first and second identifiers may be combined to define an identifier code.

One or more genus categories may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. Once genus categories have been established, each genus category is identified with a third identifier. It is then determined, based upon the stored information concerning the given asset, what genus category describes the given asset. Once the applicable genus category is determined, the given asset is designated as being described by the applicable genus category. The third identifier corresponding to the applicable genus category may then be

assigned to the given asset and the first, second and third identifiers may be combined to further define the identifier code.

One or more species categories may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. Once species categories have been established, each species category is identified with a fourth identifier. It is then determined, based upon the stored information concerning the given asset, what species category describes the given asset. Once the applicable species category is determined, the given asset is designated as being described by the applicable species category. The fourth identifier corresponding to the applicable species category may then be assigned to the given asset and the first, second, third, and fourth identifiers may be combined to further define the identifier code.

One or more sub-species categories may then be established such that the given asset may be further classified. Once sub-species categories have been established, each sub-species category is identified with a fifth identifier. It is then determined, based upon the stored information concerning the given asset, what sub-species category describes the given asset. Once the applicable sub-species category is determined, the given asset is designated as being described by the applicable sub-species category. The fifth identifier corresponding to the applicable sub-species category may then be assigned to the given asset and the first, second, third, fourth and fifth identifiers may be combined to further define the identifier code.]

[0063] The present invention is a system and method of classifying tangible assets. Tangible assets, such as art objects, are classified using a unique classification scheme which divides tangible art objects such as fine art, decorative art, antiquities, other discrete disciplines, and collectibles into order, family, genus, species, and sub-species asset categories. The present

invention allows tangible art objects to be classified into asset categories and assigned a series of identifiers such that the asset may be cross referenced with relevant data to track worldwide market performance of specific types of categorized assets. Historic market performance patterns may be graphed and cross-referenced to well known standards such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500), among others, to ensure statistical reliability.